WASHINGTON -- Members of Virginia's Congressional delegation today sent a letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel expressing bipartisan unity for immediate action to avert furloughs to the Defense Department's civilian workforce, citing the potentially disproportionate impact on the Commonwealth of Virginia. The bicameral, bipartisan group of members urged Secretary Hagel to give the military services the flexibility to further reduce expected furloughs.

Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, and Representatives Rob Wittman (VA-1), Scott Rigell (VA-2), Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-3), J. Randy Forbes (VA-4), Robert Hurt (VA-5), Bob Goodlatte (VA-6), Jim Moran (VA-8), Morgan Griffith (VA-9), Frank Wolf (VA-10), and Gerry Connolly (VA-11) wrote, in part:

"Although we applaud the recent decision to reduce likely furlough days from 22 to 14 days, thousands of Virginians still face a significant loss of pay, which will have a particularly disproportionate impact on the citizens of our state. We sincerely hope DoD will do all it can to lessen the impact of possible furloughs on our civil servants and believe there are additional steps that can be taken to support this effort."

Full text of the letter follows:

April 18, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel

Secretary of Defense 1000 Defense Pentagon Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel,

Department of Defense (DoD) agencies full flexibility to decide to what extent, if any, furloughs are to be conducted in response to the current sequester. Although we applaud the recent decision to reduce likely furlough days from 22 to 14 days, thousands of Virginians still face a significant loss of pay, which will have a particularly disproportionate impact on the citizens of our state. We sincerely hope DoD will do all it can to lessen the impact of possible furloughs on our civil servants and believe there are additional steps that can be taken to support this effort.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□ A blanket DoD-wide policy mandating uniform furloughs would not be a vote of solidarity; instead, requiring defense civilians to take unpaid furlough days when they are not necessary would unacceptably erode employee morale.□□ Allowing the service secretaries and agencies to make their own decisions based on their individual budgetary constraints will serve to best protect our civil servants at a difficult time.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this policy option which we believe is in the best interest of our nation and its Department of Defense civilian workforce.

□ Sincerely ...

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